(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Some incidents of harassment against Sikhs were reported in USA in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11,2001.

One person, Shri Balbir Singh Sodhi, was shot dead on September 15, 2001 in Mesa, Arizona (USA).

Acts of threats and vandalism against Sikhs and other Indians as well as NRIs / PIOs were reported from New York, New Jersey, Ohio and California etc. in USA.

(c) The matter was taken up with the U.S. authorities at the highest level. Prime Minister expressed his concern regarding safety of Indians, particularly Sikhs in USA to the U.S. President. In U.K. our Mission took up the matter with the Foreign Office and the local law enforcement authorities.

(d) and (e) President of USA assured the Prime Minister that he will do his utmost to prevent attacks and harassment of Sikhs and other Indian citizens. Instructions were issued to the U.S. Department of Justice, FBI and other law enforcement authorities to provide greater security to the Sikhs and other Indian citizens.

Yasser Arafat's New Delhi Visit

524. PROF. (SHRIMATI) BHARATI RAY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether President Yasser Arafat arrived New Delhi on 22nd August, 2001 to keep India informed of the development in his region; and

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held at the meet?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) President Yasser Arafat visited India on 23 August 2001. He briefed the Prime Minister on development in the Middle East Peace Process and requested him to use his influence for an early resumption of the peace process.

Visit of Russian Deputy Prime Minister

525. SHRIMATI VANG A GEETHA: Will the Minister of EXTERN; L AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Russian Deputy Prime Minister visited India recently;